

***A Killer Plot* by Ellery Adams**

This is the first *Books by the Bay Mystery* by cozy mystery author Ellery Adams. I only started reading her books last year, but she has quickly become one of my favorites. The main character in this series is Olivia Limoges. She is very unlike the typical protagonist in cozies. She's not recently divorced or widowed, she isn't struggling to start a cute little shop, she doesn't have a Scooby gang (at least to begin with), and she's honestly pretty content with her solitary life. She's actually kind of abrasive, she owns several properties and successful businesses, she doesn't have to worry about money at all – in fact she often throws money around to get her way. The opening scene with her is a very interesting introduction to the character.

What is typical of cozies is the fact that Olivia has a cozy companion, in this case a black standard poodle named Captain Haviland. Since Olivia owns the nicest restaurant in Oyster Bay, and is close with the owners of the local diner as well, he eats a lot of food that isn't super appropriate for dogs. Honestly I'm pretty sure that he eats better than most humans. And he is quite the character, with a big personality to match his size.

But on to the mystery. When Olivia's new friend ends up dead, with a haiku scrawled in spray paint nearby, she and the other members of the Bayside Book Writers group start to look into the murder. But this is just the first of a series of murders and haikus, all connected to a very prominent family. It's a bit of a puzzle as to how all of the pieces connect, since there are a lot of possible suspects. The conclusion is mostly satisfying, with a couple of loose ends that I hope are tied up in later books. I was very intrigued by Olivia's backstory, which I also hope is fleshed out in subsequent books in the series.

I like Adams' writing style, and the fact that most of her cozies are a little edgier than most, without getting into full-fledged thriller/suspense territory. While this was not my favorite of her cozies, this was a good introduction to these characters and I will definitely read more of this series to see how Olivia becoming a part of the Bayside Book Writers group changes her. The character clearly didn't have the easiest life, so it's kind of understandable that she wasn't the friendliest person in town. But I do think the fact that she now has a group of friends helped soften her hard edges a bit. The other characters in Oyster Bay are a lot of fun, so I look forward to seeing what they're all up to in the rest of the series.

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